

**- Rep. John Hall Votes to Give Consumers More Time to Prepare DTV Switch -  
- 1500 Households in New York's 19th Congressional District on Waiting List for Converter Boxes -** Washington, DC – With almost 1,500 households in New York's 19th Congressional District still on a waiting list to receive coupons to help offset the cost of purchasing digital television converter boxes, which allow an analog television set that relies on over-the-air reception to display digital signals, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) voted today to give the consumers still using analog signals more time to keep from going dark.

The Digital TV Delay Act (S. 352) passed the House today by a vote of 264 to 158. The legislation will extend the date of the analog-to-digital television transition from February 17 to June 12, 2009. With President Obama's signature, the bill will become law.

"The implementation of the DTV switch was flubbed from the start," said Congressman Hall. "Especially during these difficult economic times, consumers shouldn't be forced to purchase new equipment to receive a TV signal because the government didn't have its act together."

Individuals with analog-only televisions were able to apply for up to two \$40 coupons distributed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to subsidize the cost of purchasing a digital converter box. However, the current coupons expired within 90 days, and after expiration residents are unable to apply for new ones, leaving many without this much-needed fiscal support to secure the converter boxes. About 3 million consumers are on the waiting list for these coupons, including almost 1,500 in New York's 19th Congressional District.

\$650 million to help with the conversion was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1) which passed the House with Hall's support, but has not yet passed the Senate or been signed into law.

"\$650 million for the DTV switch in the economic stimulus bill will certainly help provide coupons for those on the wait list," said Hall. "Consumers on the wait list aren't going to get these coupons in time for the February deadline and they deserve more time."

Among its several provisions, the DTV Delay bill:

- Delays the transition by 115 days and extend the license terms of the commercial and public safety entities that will use the DTV spectrum after the transition by a corresponding number of days.
- Permits consumers who never redeemed coupons to apply for replacement coupons, while ensuring that no household can redeem more than two coupons.
- Expressly preserves broadcasters' ability to transition before the new transition date, if such a move does not interfere with another broadcast signal. The Act makes clear that the existing FCC rules and regulations concerning interference and consumer education will continue to apply.
- Expressly preserves the ability of public safety entities to use the DTV spectrum before the new transition date, subject to existing FCC rules.